

THURSDAY, AUGUST 29, 1862.

FOR THE FARMER.

FERTILIZING SOIL.

An expeditious way of improving the fertility of a cultivated soil is, by employing mechanical appliances for incorporating in a few years, in connection with the operations of nature, what she alone would seem able to perform in ages. For example, there are immense stores of phosphoric acid in a given soil, which is so firmly held in the subsoil that the particles are not in a soluble condition. Hence, they are not available by the use of useful crop-plants. The grain of wheat, for example, is composed of about 40 per cent of inorganic phosphate, and 20 per cent of nitrogen. Now, then, if these substances are absent, or if they are abundant in the soil, although in insoluble condition, not in a condition to feed the wheat plants—will it not be folly to cultivate wheat on that soil until its productivity has been improved? The elements of fertility may be in the soil, or the fertilizing resources of the farm may be ample sufficient, if properly employed, to develop the productivity so that every acre will yield a bountiful crop of grain.

The plough and other implements of husbandry frequently operate like magic in developing the productivity of the soil. Whenever the steel endures the share, the mold board, the cultivator for treck and the harrow teeth are brought in contact with the coarse particles of earth containing plant-food, the subsoil atoms are reduced to a fine powder, so that the sun, the burning heat of summer and the disintegrating influences of the frost of winter set the vast stores of phosphoric acid and potassium free; yet, the particles will be retained in the soil until the wheat plants throw on their numerous roots through the soil and collect such substances as may be available. In every 100 parts of wheat straw there are 12 parts of potassium and 67.8 parts of silica. The foregoing figures furnish the intelligent tiller of the soil something of an idea as to the requirements of land in order to produce a crop of wheat. If these substances are not present, the land may produce a diminutive growth of wheat plants; but the product will not be a bountiful crop of fair grain.

In addition to the mechanical churning and grinding of a soil, its productivity can be rapidly developed by introducing occasionally a crop of rye, the roots of which will prepare a large amount of valuable food for the cereals, while the leaves will collect a generous supply of available potassium, the atmosphere. Thus, if the crop be fed to the animals, and the accumulation of their manure be better than ever, no better hay-mow

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